BELLA'S ATONEMENT.

By Anna Shields.

TWO figures stood under the shade of a huge tree in a little garden, one strong, erect, defiant; the other drooping, timid and pleading. It was a repetition of the old, old story of true lovers torn asunder by a cruel fate, a parting and vows of constancy and faithful love.

The man, Rodney Kirke, was a fine looking young fellow of twenty-eight, who had been from infancy the ward and darling of his uncle, James Kirke, believing himself always to be the certain heir of that gentleman and ever his dutiful nephew from true, earnest love and gratitude. His life had been a shadowed one, having little brightness, for his uncle for thirty years had been an invalid—sometimes well enough to move about in his own extensive grounds, but often, for months together, confined to his room and bed, suffering intensely.

When Rodney left school and would have studied a profession or entered upon some business career, his uncle kept him bound to his chair, letting all the management of his large estate fall gradually into his hands, and taking infinite comfort from his gentle care when he was suffering.

It was a strange, gray life for youth, and Rodney fretted sometimes at merging his own existence into that of the invalid, but the argument his uncle used at such times was a powerful one.

"When I die this whole property will be yours, and you must care for it and control it. It will never be necessary for you to undertake any other business."

He was content, therefore, to let his life narrow to the limits his uncle dictated, until, about two years before the date when this story opens, Mr. Kirke being ordered to the seaside, there met Mrs. Olney, a widow with one son very nearly Rodney's age. Looking back, it was all like a whirling dream to the young man to recall how the handsome widow took possession of his uncle, flattered him, petted him, coaxed him and married him.

The return to Ferndale, James Kirke's home, was a wedding trip, and from that hour every effort was made by the bride to thrust Rodney out of his place in his uncle's heart and home. Misrepresentations were made at first in vain; afterward with more effect. Keeping him out of his uncle's room, Mrs. Kirke made the old gentleman believe his absence was from voluntary neglect. At last a tangible cause of complaint was found, when Rodney, lonely and miserable, fell in love with Bella Green, whose father—horror of horrors! kept a small drinking saloon, and whose mother was vulgarity personified. The girl herself had been educated in a good seminary, and came home to find all her surroundings revolting to a delicate, sensitive nature, refined by study and associations with companions above her in the social scale.

She was wonderfully pretty, considering what her parents were, and Rodney's deepest sympathies were roused by her miserable home life. That he met her in the shady lanes and woods was from no desire for concealment, but simply because her home was so noisy, ill-ordered and vulgar that there was no place for quiet or conversation.

The story of this "low association" was so told to James Kirke that he was furious with anger, and this, added to the other sins attributed to Rodney, so roused him that the young man had put before him the choice of giving up his love at once and forever or leaving his home. All the chivalry of a sensitive heart, which a life of seclusion had made still more romantic, was aroused, and Rodney refused obedience to his uncle for the first time.

And so, under the great tree in Sam Green's garden, he was taking leave of the girl for whose sake he was leaving luxury and hope, to face a world whose bitterness he had never tasted.

"You will be true to me, Bella?" he said, as he pressed a final kiss upon her tear-stained face.

"I will wait for you if it is for twenty years," she said, clinging to him.

And, keeping that promise for comfort, Rodney Kirke left Ferndale to try to find employment in L——, a large manufacturing town ten miles distant, where his uncle owned property. And every face that had smiled upon him for years was turned away; every door that had opened to him was closed. His uncle's influence, wielded by his wife, kept him from even the lowest position, and he suffered from positive hunger more than once in the first three months of his exile. The bitter regrets for the easy obedience to his uncle which had made him neglect all preparation for a life of self-support, were unavailing, and there came a winter night when he stood in the streets, homeless and penniless and battling the temptation to defy even his Creator by suicide.

Suddenly he roused himself from such bitter reverie and walked rapidly until he reached a handsome house, where a tin sign announced to all comers that "Dr. Bedlowe" lived within. He was in his office when Rodney Kirke entered, and rose at once to give him a most cordial greeting.

"You give me courage for asking a favor," the young man said, gratefully. "Old friends have not cared to see me of late."

"Anything I can do for you is done," said the doctor, cordially. "I think, Rodney, your old friends do not understand, as I do, how fully you have been wronged. Knowing everything, I have exerted all my influence with your uncle in your favor, but so far in vain. Now tell me, what can I do for you?"

"Doctor, I am starving! I will not beg. I can not work without some experience, but there is one position I am fit for. Long training," he said, very bitterly, "has made me a good nurse. Will you give me a nurse's place and a nurse's wages in the L—— hospital?"

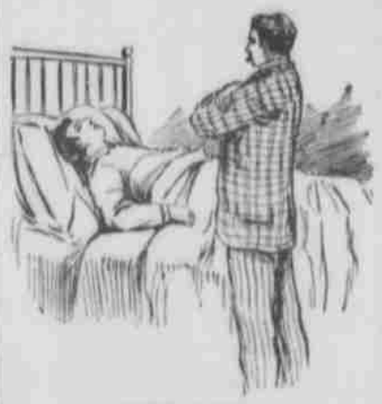
"You!" the doctor cried, and then tried to move Rodney from this resolution, offering him opportunities to study medicine, loans of money—anything the truest friendship could suggest. But Rodney was firm. He must earn the bread he ate, though he thankfully accepted the doctor's proposition to make the position a stepping stone for the study of medicine and surgery. It were far too long a story to record all the trials of the next two years. Faithful in the discharge of every duty, the nurse found time for study under Dr. Bedlowe's advice, and put in every dollar not needed for actual existence toward the expense of a medical education. He was amazed himself at the enthusiasm his study roused, and the doctor encouraged him warmly, seeing clearly how he would be fitted for his profession. But over the new hopes there hung a heavy cloud. Six months after he left Ferndale, his letters to Bella remained unanswered so long that he went to seek her, to find the store in new hands and the family gone.

Shocked, anxious and bewildered as he was, he did not lose his faith. When he could offer her a home he would seek Bella and find her true to him. News from home came to him from Dr. Bedlowe. He was kept informed of the rapid changes—the first that Ralph Olney had taken his place in his uncle's affections and was a most devoted stepson. Later, Mrs. Kirke died, but Rodney's letters to his uncle were returned, and he was informed in a curt note that Ralph Olney would be his uncle's heir, as he was his "devoted son."

"Your uncle is completely under that young man's control," Dr. Bedlowe said, "and the mention of your name excites him to a perfect fury of rage. Trust me to do all I can for you!"

And having already given up all hope of reconciliation, Rodney only studied more diligently, and gave more faithful attention to every opportunity to advance his practical knowledge.

He was in his own room, a tiny cell of a place at the end of his ward, busied with preparations for the day, when a stroke upon the bell over his head warned him that an accident case was on the way to his care. Instantly he was on the alert, and moved to the vacant bed that must receive the new patient. Cool, self-possessed, but tender for all suffering, he helped to lift the injured man from the stretcher to the



"RUN OVER."

bed, but his very heart seemed to cease its beating as his eyes fell upon the pallid face of Ralph Olney.

"Run over!" the men said who had carried him. "Ain't moved nor spoke since we picked him up. Not dead, is he?"

No! He was not dead, but frightfully injured, and the doctors who clustered about the bed shook their heads ominously. It was strongly impressed upon Rodney that the life of the patient hung upon a thread, the strands of which were largely composed of his watchfulness and strict obedience to orders, and then he was left to watch. Under Providence he held in his hands the life of his enemy—of the man who had supplanted him, maligned him, injured him in every way. He had thought the worst shock was over, until, an hour later, one of the physicians not Dr. Bedlowe—entered the room, followed by a shrieking, sobbing woman, who sank upon her knees beside the patient, whispering:

"Oh, Ralph, speak to me! My husband, my dear husband!"

And the weeping wife was Bella. Was it strange that Rodney Kirke asked himself if he was in a dream—some hideous nightmare pressing upon his brain? He moved to leave them together, but Bella caught his hand, and in broken, sobbing sentences implored him to forgive her—to be kind to Ralph and save his life for her sake and her child. It was pitiful to see her, to hear the story of the web of deceit woven about James Kirke, who was ignorant of the marriage of his stepson. But at last, when the night shadows were falling, Rodney Kirke was free to collect his thoughts—to try to make some coherent story in his bewildered brain. His love betrayed, he felt with a strange wonder no pain in the fact. The contempt for the deceit that had left him so easily and taken the new heir in his place had struck his love dead. Even anger was withered by the scorn he felt.

But there opened before his mind at once the power of revenge in his hands. His rival's life depended on his skill and his inheritance upon his science. His uncle had written to him that this man would be his heir; probably he had long before made his will and carried out his threat. Yet, if he died, Rodney was his heir at law, and Bella's falsehood removed the only cause of difference between himself and his uncle.

Days passed, and as if he had been his treasured friend, Rodney Kirke nursed Ralph Olney back to life. He had fought back all selfish consideration, and left the results to the future. His duty was to nurse his patient faithfully, constantly, and he exceeded his duty, only leaving him where Bella was allowed to sit beside him. A deep pity for the woman he had loved filled his heart. It was evident that her infidelity was the yielding of a weak nature to a strong one, and that she feared her husband as much as she loved him. When consciousness returned to the invalid it became evident that the mind was seriously impaired, and a gentleness, evidently new to her, greeted Bella's timid ministrations.

Dr. Bedlowe, watching all, urged upon Rodney the duty of seeking reconciliation with his uncle, but the young man absolutely refused to make any advances.

"You say you have told him of Ralph Olney's marriage," he told his old friend, "and if he wants me he must send for me."

But the invalid, too, was obstinate, and while Ralph was still in the hospital James Kirke was found dead in his bed—heart disease having followed a train of other ailments.

The will that made his step-son his heir was found, and, with a bitterness like death, Rodney one morning assisted in dressing his patient for the last time, and saw him drive away, with his wife and baby boy, to take possession of the home he had regarded as his own for the greater part of his life. Ten years later Dr. Kirke, a man already known in his profession, was sitting in his office alone, when his old friend, Dr. Bedlowe, came in, his face full of pleasure.

"At last!" he said. "At last, I may congratulate you. But I must tell my story first. Before your uncle died, Rodney, he gave me his solemn promise to right the wrong he had done you. Ralph Olney was not a poor man, having inherited a fair income from his father, but he was grasping, selfish and deceitful until the accident that threw him into your care, and that left him crippled and imbecile. When your uncle died I thought the will that he had promised to make in your favor was one of the unaccomplished acts dying men so often leave until too late. But to-day, only to-day, Mrs. Olney came to my office with the will, which she found a week ago, quite by accident. Rodney, you must pity and forgive her. Such a heart-broken face I have never seen. Five children lie in little graves, and her husband is only a wearing source of grief and care. In this last week she has removed all their personal possessions from Ferndale, and she asks of you only that you will not seek to find her in her new home or to thank her. She was fearful that pride or some mistaken chivalry might lead you to refuse what she called her atonement, and so brought the will to me. Your old home awaits you! May you be very happy there!"

Good Enough for the Price.

Mrs. Goregular (to lady friend): I was very much disappointed with the sermon—very. Little Willie (who had had his eye on the plate): Yes, mater, but what can you expect for a penny? —Tit-Bits.

Just the Thing.

Lea (sadly)—"I don't know what to do with that boy of mine. He's been two years at the medical college and still keeps at the foot of his class." Perrins (promptly)—"Make a chiropodist of him."—Tit-Bits.

In the Counting Room.

"Spilkins seems like a nice, quiet fellow." "Spilkins? That man's a regular dictator." "To his wife?" "No, to his typewriter."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

ABOUT THE BABY.

The mouth of the bottle fed baby should be washed out daily with a soft cloth wet in water in which a little borax and soda have been dissolved.

Where baby's gums are red and painful, they may be gently rubbed with the finger with a little of the following mixture. Nitrate of potass, one scruple; syrup of roses, half an ounce.

Let the baby sleep. No one has a right to break in upon the repose ordained by a wise providence for the healthy development of the brain and nervous system of the little one while the miracle of soul wakening goes on. Visitors can admire him sufficiently if his eyes are closed; and if the hour for nursing him passes, it is proof, conclusive, that nature is fully aware of his greatest needs and is responding to them.

Milk may be tested by a piece of blue litmus paper, which becomes red if placed in anything at all acid. Litmus paper can be bought at any chemist's and should be kept in every nursery. A small piece is to be torn off, and placed just under the surface of the milk. As milk rapidly takes up any impurities from the air it should be kept in a cool place out of the way of dust and drainage arrangements. Milk may be kept good if there is no refrigerator by turning it out into a large basin and covering this with a thin cloth wrung out in cold water. If an alkali, such as lime water or carbonate of soda, has to be added to the milk in order to prevent acidity in the baby, it should not be added until the milk is required for use, lest by taking away the acid taste or smell it should prevent detection of the fact that the milk is not fit for the infant.

Conviction is worthless till it converts itself into conduct.—Carlyle.

THIRD RAIL SYSTEM.

ELECTRICITY IS GOING TO DISPLACE STEAM.

Experiments Made by Various Roads—There Are Thirty-Six Thousand Locomotives Which May Soon Be Sent to the Scrap Heap.

FROM the New York Herald: President Clark of the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroad says the steam locomotives are all going into the scrap-heap at no far distant day. This radical opinion is the result of the experiments made by his road with the third-rail electric system recently. Mr. Clark goes several steps farther than most of the railroad people who have considered the introduction of electricity on long distance roads, though an official of the Pennsylvania railroad said a year ago that in his opinion it was only a question of time when the electric motor would take the place of the locomotive operated by steam power on all the railroads in America. The Pennsylvania is one of the lines which has been experimenting with electricity as a substitute for steam, but its work has been done very quietly and the world has heard very little of what it has done. One of its short lines has been operated for more than a year by the trolley system and within the last six months it has equipped its Turtle Creek branch with a trolley wire and electric motors with a view to proving still further the availability of electricity. This Turtle Creek line runs past the works of the Westinghouse Electric company, near Pittsburg, and it is equipped with the Westinghouse motors.

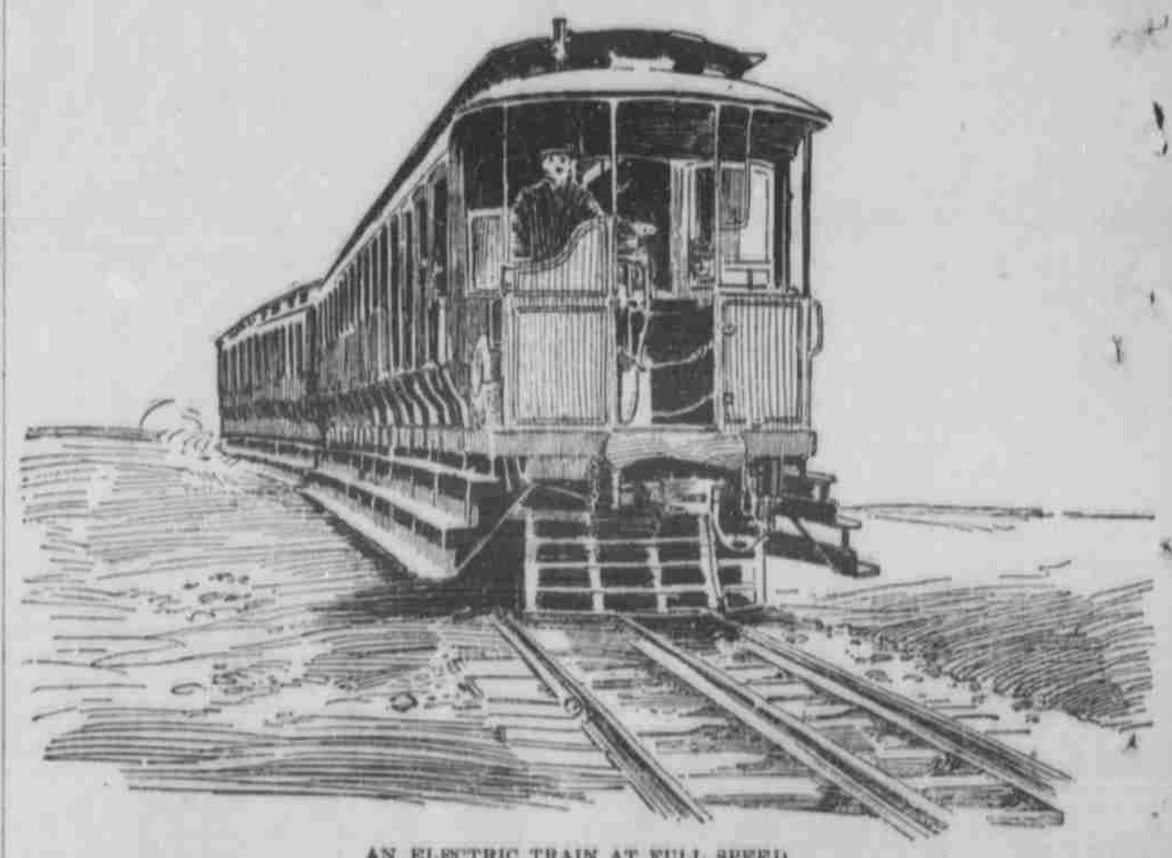
Another line which has been making use of electricity for short distances for two years is the Baltimore and Ohio. It has a trolley system in the tunnel at Baltimore through which its through trains all run. This system was introduced not for the purpose of operating more economically or quickly, but to relieve the tunnel of its terrors—the smoke and cinders from the steam locomotive. For the same reason, among others, the St. Louis Terminal company is considering the introduction of electricity on its lines. The St. Louis company has the most complete terminal plant in the world. It operates two bridges over the Mississippi river, one of them—the famous Eads bridge—being connected with the Union station by means of a tunnel. When the first train carrying passengers passed over the great St. Louis bridge—July 4, 1876, I believe—I was one of the passengers, and, in common with the other passengers, I was almost smothered when the train entered the tunnel. That train did not get through the tunnel with its load, but afterward, the tunnel was connected with a big air shaft in which a huge rotary fan was run night and day, and by using coke-burning engines, the bridge company was able to operate successfully. Still the gas from the coke is a draw-back, and many persons who go to St. Louis frequently choose the routes which operate over the other bridge in preference to going through the tunnel. This objection to the Eads bridge route will be removed if electricity is adopted by the terminal company in place of steam.

The Illinois Central is another company which is thinking of introducing electricity in place of steam as a motive power. In answer to an inquiry made recently when the proposed change was announced, Stuyvesant Fish, the president of the road, said: "The only thing that I can say about the introduction of electricity on the Illinois Central is that the board of directors have reached the conclusion that such motive power should be substituted for steam on local suburban trains in Chicago, between Randolph street and Sixty-third street, a distance of eight miles.

"In the winter of 1891-92 we made a very thorough investigation, hoping to be able to introduce electricity in the movement of our trains to and from the World's Fair, to be held in Chicago in 1893. The results were not such as to induce us to make the change at that time, but in the meanwhile the chief engineer of the company, Mr. J. F. Wallace, has been carefully watching the development of electrical appliances, and it is now believed that the science has reached the point where it will be safe to make the change. It is not at all determined what system will be used nor have we any close estimates as to cost, either of construction, installation or operation. These matters are, however, being investigated, and in due course we look to see the new power applied. In reply to your last question—'is it practicable to substitute electricity on the main line'—that is to say, in the general operation of the railroad, I have no hesitancy in saying no."

It will be observed that the conclusions of Mr. Fish as to the possibilities of long-distance operation by electricity differ from those of President Clark, and, I may add, they agree with those of electricians and men interested in the introduction of electric motors. In fact, the makers of electric locomotives came to the conclusion a long time ago that it would not be possible in the present development of the motor to use it on any but short lines, or lines on which there was a constant succession of trains, like, for example, the lines between New York and Philadelphia. On long stretches of road, where perhaps no more than two through passenger trains and two or three locals are run in each direction every day, the operation of the road by trolley, they say, would be too expensive. Power houses must be established at certain intervals, and the operation of these and the waste of current by leakage from the wire must be taken into consideration. Electricity on street railroads is an economical motive power because of the number of cars in operation. On some lines, where the traffic is small, the trolley system is more expensive than the old horse power line.

Mr. Clark has gone beyond any of the other railroad men of this country in his experiments with electricity as a substitute for steam, and he speaks therefore with more authority. He started out at a summer resort near Boston, Nantasket, finding it necessary to compete with the trolley lines with which the whole of Massachusetts is being gridironed rapidly. The experimental line was operated by trolley. The cars put on were heavy, and mounted on high trucks provided with regular railroad springs. In other words, the general construction was like that of a railroad, with lines of seats running at right angles with the track. They were provided with electric headlights and a whistle operated by compressed air. These cars took excursionists between Pemberton landing and Nantasket for a 5-cent fare and they were operated successfully at a profit. The experiment proved, by an entire season's work, that it was cheaper to generate power in a stationary plant and transmit it to the cars over wire than to generate it at the head of the train. After that experiments were made with heavy loads, and the electric motors pulled 1,000 tons of dead weight on a level track with ease.



AN ELECTRIC TRAIN AT FULL SPEED.
(From a Photograph.)

You Can't Tell.

"Appearances are deceitful." "Yes; the saloonists put up a quart bottle of whisky now so you can't tell if a man is taking home a future jag or a new pair of corsets for his wife."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

Yes, Indeed.

A 13-year-old boy of Louisville, Ky., fell from a ladder the other day, and when he was picked up it was found that he had sustained no serious injury, but his hair had turned gray.

SAKHALIN AND ITS COAL.

Prison Life Is Harder Than in Siberia.

Sakhalin is, for administrative purposes, divided into three districts, viz.: Korsakovsky post in the south, Tymovsk in the north and Alexandrovsky post on the western coast, says the Fortnightly Review. The latter, which is situated in the center of the coal district, is a picturesque, straggling, town of about 7,000 inhabitants, consisting almost entirely of officials and convicts. This is the most important penal settlement on the island, containing the largest prison, and is, moreover, the residence of the governor of Sakhalin, a subordinate of the governor-general of eastern Siberia. Alexandrovsky is garrisoned by about 1,600 men, and contains large foundries and workshops for convict labor, but most of the prisoners are employed in the adjacent coal mines of Dui. The coal is excellent for steaming purposes, but owing to the difficulties of transport that at present exist, somewhat dear, and it cannot now be delivered for less than 12 rubles per ton at Vladivostok. The output in 1890 was 2,400,000 tons. Korsakovsky post on the south coast is the next largest settlement, containing about 5,000 convicts, who are chiefly employed in agricultural pursuits. Although it may seem a paradox, the remaining prisons in the interior of the island—Derbynskaya, Rykovskaya and Onor—are not prisons at all, but huge wooden barracks, innocent of bolts or bars. Here, also, the work done is solely agricultural. Prison life at Sakhalin is undoubtedly harder than on the mainland of Siberia, but, on the other hand, the actual confinement is of much shorter duration. There are three classes of prisoners, viz.: 1. Convicts who, having served their time in prison, are free to live in a certain district and earn their own livelihood. 2. Convicts confined in prison and compelled to work in the mines, foundries, or at agricultural labor. 3. Convicts confined to prison in chains.

He Was a Logician.

"Talk about your subtle reasoners," said the man with the low-quartered shoes and flannel rag around his throat, "my friend Hoskins was a dandy. I was walking with him one night when we were both going home, and he stopped suddenly and looked at a string tied around his little finger.

"'My wife tied that there,' he said, 'and I'll be darned if I can remember what I was to get. Let me see, that's a knot, so I won't forget—so that makes it a forget-me-knot. A forget-me-not is a flower. Ah, I thought I could figure it out. I was to send up a sack of flour.'"

A Week at the British Mint.

During ordinary seasons the British mint turns out 420,000 sovereigns a week. But it can turn out a million in a week, and has done so more than once.

TAKEN FROM THE TALMUD.

He who promotes the good is greater than he who performs it.

Open wide thy house to the poor and let them be a part of the family.

Whoever visiteth the sick relieves him of something of his suffering.

Cast no stone into the well from which thou hast drunken even once.

Fasting—The virtue of fasting lies in charity. A fast without charity is suicide.

Love that one who makes thee see thy faults rather than him who ever praiseth thee.

Unhappy is that man who deems himself lost—unhappy he who deems himself perfect.

Good deeds—Every good deed performed by a man raises up an angel by his side that never leaves him.

Popularity—Whoever makes himself beloved by men is beloved by God, but he who is hated by men can never be loved by God.

Grace at meals—A meal without a religious word is a death-feast. A meal blessed with religious thoughts is a heavenly banquet.